



TESTIMONY TO THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE ON RAISED BILL S.B. 948, AN ACT ADDRESSING EDUCATION FUNDING AND RACIAL EQUITY

March 3, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Sanchez, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Lawrence Spivey. I am a Certified Public Accountant and a local business owner in Bridgeport CT. I am also a father, coach, and active community member in Bridgeport. I am here in support of FaithActs for Education and of SB 948.

Being a parent, coach, and mentor in the Bridgeport area, I've witnessed several disadvantages that our kids in urban areas have to go through that kids in more suburban areas don't have to struggle with. It was hard for the kids I mentor to get access to laptops and computers just for distance learning. There were students in Westport going home with ipads. Not an off brand tablet or a refurbished laptop that doesn't fully work.

I volunteer my hours to coach a basketball team of local Bridgeport students, and the lack of funding and resources makes the roadblocks never ending. We don't have access to gyms because they close after school hours, the very timeframe these kids need something positive and productive to do. The district can't afford to pay anyone to look after the facility while it's being used. When we can access a gym, it's usually run down and the equipment is old and useless: deflated basketballs, wood damage on the floors, etc. It's demoralizing to try to teach kids a skill without the basic tools they need to excel.

I always knew this was a problem but it became even more obvious to me when my son was accepted into open choice and got to attend school in Fairfield. The first thing he noticed was how much better the lunch food is in terms of taste and healthy options. Next, the sports facilities and teams always have good equipment and good condition jerseys to wear. At his new school in Fairfield, he never has to share books and they never lack any resources they need to adequately teach the class, even with all the changes to education after COVID. They don't depend that much on fundraising for things, either. They have more teacher's aids, guidance counselors, and tutors, which allows the kids to easily get extra help. The school gym and other facilities are open after hours for the kids to run clubs and use the gym to keep them busy.

The challenges we face day to day in the urban school district is largely due to lack of funding. My son receives \$4,000 more for his education because he goes to school in Fairfield.

You are elected to protect our children and treat them fairly. When that difference in funding happens under your watch, you're sending a message to kids in Bridgeport that they don't deserve the same



resources as kids five minutes away in Fairfield. Well let me tell you, these children deserve good meals. They deserve extracurricular activities. They deserve new text books. They deserve extra support. And they have been denied what they deserve for too long. We have to narrow the gap between urban and suburban school districts and it starts right here with SB 948.

Please vote "Yes" on S.B. 948 and support its passage in the General Assembly so that our state's budget reflects the values of justice and equity in education.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and leadership on this issue.

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